

Qualitative Project Management –Collaboration, Scal-ability and Efficiency

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Qualitative research has ‘come of age’, the methodology is now commonly used in large, multi-site, collaborative research projects. Whilst welcome to the qualitative community, this expansion brings new logistical challenges associated with data management, increased participant numbers, collaborative partners, compliance issues and geographically disparate sites.

Although robust software for qualitative analysis exists, there is a lack of tailored tools for managing large scale qualitative research projects. In response, this paper outlines the development of a qualitative project management website designed to offer users a central point for data collection and storage, collaboration and workflow management. This innovative online tool assists in the management of qualitative research projects by facilitating the exchange of information and data between research team members and by providing a central secure location in which all project related material can be stored. The web-site also uses workflow management to provide automatic information exchange and alerts between research team members (transcribers, project officers, researchers, industry), based upon task analysis of the qualitative research process.

Use of the website for secure data collection, storage and workflow management has been shown to increase research efficiency, accountability, security, audit capabilities and ethics committee compliance, whilst decreasing document handling costs, logistical issues and redundant processes. The system has allowed scalability of the research process in participant numbers, site locations and staff numbers. An overview of the system with future technological

directions will be discussed in relation to further streamlining the qualitative research process.